

Safe in the Swim

Swimming is fun for people of all ages and abilities. Following are some safety tips to think about as you splash splash your way to cool fun and fitness.

Buddy up – don't swim alone, even in your own pool. In public areas, swim where a lifeguard is on duty. Always watch children closely when they're in or near the water.

Don't mix alcohol and water activities. Avoid alcohol whether you're sunning on a boat or swimming laps. It is a cause of many drownings.

Don't dive – walk into water. To avoid injury, never dive in, even in a diving area or from the pool edge. Unlike competition pools, a residential pool is usually too shallow, while lakes and oceans may deepen abruptly or conceal hazards. If you have a diving board, experts advise you to remove it to avoid serious risk.

Feet first at water parks. Always go down slides feet first and face up. Read the rules – precautions vary depending on the activity.

Watch where you're swimming. Stay clear of motorboats, jet skis and other motorized watercraft. Remain in designated swimming areas. Never swim under anything.

Not a swimmer? Stay in the shallow end (water level should be lower than your chest). Never go into or on the water without a life jacket.

Learn CPR. Studies show CPR performed by bystanders until paramedics arrive improves drowning victims' chances of surviving.

Always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket on boats, kayaks, water skis – anything that floats – regardless of swimming ability or age.

[Cutline]

If you don't know how to swim, you're missing one of life's great pleasures. To find a swimming class near you, contact your local Red Cross chapter or municipal pool – sign up the kids too.

Sources:

"Water Safety Tips." Red Cross, 2008. Accessed 1/6/09 at <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html>.

"Water-Related Injuries: Fact Sheet." CDC, 6/12/08. Accessed 1/6/09 at <http://www.cdc.gov/print.do?url=http%3A/www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm>.

BEST BITS

The American Diabetes Association has announced new prediabetes screening guidelines. Starting no later than age 45, all adults should have a blood screening test for prediabetes. Even young men and women should consider having the test done if they are overweight and have at least 1 other risk factor. Risks include physical inactivity, high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol, racial minority status and family history. For normal results, screening may be repeated every 3 years.

Source:

"Standards of medical care in diabetes—2008." Diabetes Care 31(2008): Supplement 1, p. S12-S54.

Watermelon: Summer's best dessert. It's nutritious – a 2-cup serving of fresh watermelon has nearly 5 times the level of lycopene as a medium fresh tomato: the red pigment lycopene has antioxidant properties that may help fight chronic disease. Watermelon also contains vitamins A, B₆, C and potassium. Choose those with well-rounded ends that yield to pressure.

Never touch the T Zone! That's the message from the Henry the Hand Foundation, a nonprofit devoted to educating the public about hand washing to prevent illness. The T Zone represents your eyes, nose and mouth, where bacteria and other germs love to grow. Putting a finger in your eye, nose or mouth is the most common way to catch infectious diseases, such as the flu and gastro-intestinal bugs. So remember – hands off!

Source:

"Do not touch the T Zone!" Henry the Hand Foundation, 1/13/09. Accessed 1/13/09 at http://www.henrythehand.com/pages/content/t_zone.html

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SPECIAL REPORT

EYE OPENER: Sleep IQ QUIZ

Do you often struggle to stay awake and alert during the day? Just how much is sleep deprivation affecting your life? Not getting enough sleep leads to poor work performance, injuries, health problems, and difficulty getting along with others. New research also suggests poor sleep impacts aging, weight gain and diabetes. **Before you nod off, take the**

sleep test (right). Then use the diary (below) to learn your sleep needs:

SLEEP Test

1. **Daytime sleepiness is always caused by sleep shortage.**
True False
2. **Stress is the No. 1 reason people blame for insomnia.**
True False
3. **Your body can learn to function normally with a sleep debt of 1 or 2 hours a night.**
True False
4. **Resting in bed with your eyes closed cannot satisfy your body's need for sleep.**
True False
5. **A glass of wine before bedtime will produce better quality sleep.**
True False

ANSWERS

1. *False* – You can be drowsy during the day with an urge to fall asleep, even after getting adequate sleep. Frequent drowsiness may signal a health problem (such as allergies or teeth grinding), *sleep apnea* (disrupted breathing while asleep) or *narcolepsy* (sudden uncontrolled sleep).

Daytime drowsiness is a serious safety risk. Sleepiness is related to a million vehicle crashes each year!

2. *True* – But stress accounts for only a fraction of people who suffer *insomnia* (difficulty falling or staying asleep); many factors contribute, including medications, indigestion, depression and medical conditions.

3. *False* – If you lose sleep, you need to make up the debt – with sleep. Sleep need is biological, and most adults need 7 to 9 hours daily to function well.

4. *True* – Sleep is as critical to your health as food and water, and there's no substitute for quality sleep – the kind that provides restorative, uninterrupted sleep essential for health and alertness.

5. *False* – Alcohol may be calming and help you fall asleep, but it typically disrupts sleep. If your sleep is often restless, alcohol may be a factor.

Sleep need remains unchanged throughout adulthood. Older people may wake more frequently through the night and may sleep less, but the amount of sleep they require does not change.

Sleep Diary

Sleepiness Scale: Circle one.

1 2 3 4 5

1 being *Wide awake*, 3 being *A little tired*; 5 being *Drowsy tired* [The 1-5 scale should be below all of the "How tired am I?"s". See attached visual for reference.]



SLEEP DIARY

Sleep Diary for _____

Monday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

2. How tired am I this morning? (Circle one.)



1
I feel wide
awake and ready
to do anything.

2

3
I am awake, but
a little tired.

4

5
I would rather
be sleeping.



Tuesday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

Wednesday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

Thursday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

Friday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

Saturday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

Sunday

1. Time I went to bed ____ Time I woke up ____ Number of hours of sleep ____

1 2 3 4 5

SUNDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

MONDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

TUESDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

WEDNESDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

THURSDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

FRIDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

SATURDAY Bedtime ____ Wake time ____ Hours of Sleep ____
How tired am I?

Sources:

"Sleep Myths – Fact or Fiction? Quiz." National Sleep Foundation. Acc. 1/11/09 at http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0IxP/b.2466811/k.4CDC/Sleep_Myths_Fact_or_Fiction_Quiz.htm.

"Let Sleep Work for You." National Sleep Foundation. Acc. 1/11/09 at http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0IxP/b.2419187/k.7254/Let_Sleep_Work_for_You.htm.

"Helping Yourself to a Good Night's Sleep." National Sleep Foundation. Acc. 1/11/09 at http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0IxP/b.2421167/k.238/Helping_Yourself_to_a_Good_Nights_Sleep.htm

"Sleep Diary." NIH, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Acc. 1/11/09 at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/starslp/teachers/sleep_diary.htm.

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FITNESS GUIDELINES

3 Things Your Exercise Plan Needs

Most Americans don't exercise regularly. The most common reasons why are lack of time, enjoyment, and knowledge about how to exercise. Sound familiar? If so, here's how to get exercise on your side, for good.

Commitment – You'd like to exercise more.

Yet it's so easy to skip it, even when faced with easy opportunities to do it. Solution: Make a case for yourself. Visualize the pluses, such as more energy and confidence or appearance, not to mention dozens of health benefits.

Short on time? Ask yourself what you'd be doing if you weren't walking, biking or lifting weights. Surfing the Web? Text messaging or chatting on the phone? Watching TV? Are those sedentary pursuits as beneficial as exercising your body?

Start calling yourself an exerciser, who will no longer pass up chances to be active. Keep repeating to yourself the many rewards of being an exerciser.

Tip: Keeping a daily journal is an excellent kick-start to many new habits, especially exercise. Charting your progress keeps you motivated. It feels good to fill in the blanks.

Specific Goals – Do you have a plan?

Without realistic targets you may start gung ho down a path you cannot stay on, and fall off. Solution: Identify the results you most want to achieve – muscle strength and toning, stretching to ease backache, yoga to relieve stress, or aerobic activities to lose weight. Like most people you'll have multiple reasons to increase physical activity.

List 3 targets:

- 1 Choice(s) for exercise, sports or physical activity.
- 2 How often you will fit in your choice(s) in the first week, and into the next month.
- 3 The amount of time you know you can manage without fail – even as little as 2 10-minute dumbbell sessions in the first week.

Base your plan on variables such as weather, work, travel, health and general obligations. When major events threaten to derail your goals, don't be discouraged; you can always return to your plan.

Pleasure – Forget boring activities.

If typical exercises bore you, you may dread the daily effort forever. In fact, the word “exercise” is a de-motivator for many people. Solution: List some options that will get you up and moving.

There are countless “active” pursuits that are both enjoyable and beneficial to your health – and fit well into everyday living. Check “faithful tricks”.

Best advice: People who stick with exercise for years are those who find the pleasure of activity is in the feeling of movement – they love the way exercise makes them feel. It becomes second nature to move every day, and that is the ultimate motivation. Just give yourself the chance.

Sources:

Leanna Skamulis. “10 Easy Ways to Make Exercise a Habit.” Health & Fitness. WebMD. Accessed 1/11/09 at <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/10-easy-ways-make-exercise-habit?print=true>.

Barbara Russi Sarnataro. “Hate exercise? Here’s how you can learn to love working out.” Health & Fitness. WebMD. Accessed 1/11/09 at <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/hate-exercise?print=true>.

“Three Things Every Exercise Program Should Have.” Fit Facts. American Council on Exercise. Accessed 1/11/09 at http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts_display.aspx?itemid=78.

Fitness Faithful Tricks

List all the activities you would enjoy – and mix them up. Some ideas:

- Take a dance class or scuba lessons.
- Join friends for golf.
- Hike or bike on nearby trails.
- Try a water exercise class.
- Pump some weights or pedals while watching TV.
- Try a comforting mind-body approach with yoga or Pilates.
- Reward yourself for goals reached.
- Explore what’s fun for you – maybe it’s learning to rollerblade or snowboard.

- Walk with a friend or a pedometer. Walk your dog or kids. Walk where the surroundings appeal to you.

Goal Line: Don't like solo exercise? Grab a friend or co-worker and walk or bike together.

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BALANCE WORK & FAMILY

Vacation at its Best

You've earned a vacation. Time to do whatever you want, or do nothing at all but enjoy a change of routine. To make the most of vacation:

Plan it. Craving adventure and excitement? A week in the wilderness or an exotic locale may provide the change of pace you need. How about a bike tour, canoeing, a yoga retreat or a healthy cooking workshop with friends?

But if you're ready for pure rest and relaxation, a low-key vacation – one that won't take lots of energy or cash – might provide the most pleasure now.

Allow enough time to get ready for travel. All the extra effort of leaving home – errands, shopping, packing and preparing for your absence – can be strenuous and stressful if you have to rush. What fun is that?

Stay flexible. Expect the unexpected, like lost luggage, long lines, mixed-up reservations or delays, especially if you fly. Make it easy on yourself; relax and be patient.

Do a few things well. Trying to do and see too much on vacation can leave you exhausted. Prioritize your time to avoid overload. If you have children, be sensitive to their limitations, too.

Tip: Fit in your exercise routine and some walks. Staying active will help you avoid weight gain and improve sleep and energy.

A long-anticipated vacation probably will not be perfect or transform your life. But it can reward your hard work with fun, relaxation and a renewed spirit.

More Info:

U.S. and Canada travel planning: <http://www.triptrivia.com>; CDC Travelers' Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

MIND Your Mental Health

Mental Health Workout

You know exercise builds fitness and fights disease. But it also has the power to improve your mental well-being. Several studies link regular exercise to positive self-esteem, better mood, and less depression.

How much exercise will make a difference in your mental health? According to a University College London (UCL) study, 30 minutes of daily moderate-intensity activity 5 days per week is recommended to help protect both mental and physical health.

What kind of activity? Any daily physical activity is beneficial. Of the 19,842 men and women in the UCL study, those who participated in sports experienced a 33% reduction in distress and those who did light domestic tasks, such as gardening or housework, showed a 15%-20% improvement.

What about depression? Although scientists don't fully understand how exercise relieves depression, research suggests exercise releases mood-elevating chemicals. But exercise may simply offset depression by raising your sense of well-being and confidence and providing enjoyment and distraction from worries. Many people find exercise can also relieve stress and improve sleep.

Research suggests physical activity also helps improve mental ability. Studies have found active people have a better quality of life because they can perform routine chores and activities more easily; they are more alert and better able to learn; and are more likely to live independently.

Walking, swimming, biking, lifting weights – whatever activity you prefer, regular physical activity relieves the stress and strain of today's busy, ever-changing world.

Sources:

"Exercise (Physical Activity: Mental Health and Mental Ability." American Heart Association, 2009. Accessed on 1/8/09 at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4550>.

Landers, Daniel. "The Influence of Exercise on Mental Health." Arizona State University. Accessed on 1/8/09 at <http://www.fitness.gov/mentalhealth.htm>.

"Depression and anxiety: Exercise eases symptoms." MayoClinic.com, 10/23/07. Accessed on 1/8/09 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression-and-exercise/MH00043>.

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SELF CARE

SELF-Assessment

TEETH Grinding

Are you in the habit of grinding, gnashing or clenching your teeth? You may have *bruxism*, a condition that can develop when you unconsciously clench and grind your teeth together, either awake or asleep. Bruxism can be mild and random or frequent and serious enough to hurt your teeth, jaw and the tissues in your mouth. The cause is often related to unrelieved stress and tension.

Do you have bruxism?

Signs and symptoms:

- ☐ My teeth sometimes grind together or clench.

- ☐ My grinding occurs night or day.
- ☐ My dentist says my teeth show a lot of wear and tear.
- ☐ My tooth enamel is very worn.
- ☐ My teeth are overly sensitive.
- ☐ My jaw muscles often feel tense.
- ☐ My jaw joint feels sore or painful.
- ☐ My head, face or ears are painful or achy.

Factors that increase risk:

- ☐ My bite is poorly aligned (*malocclusion*).
- ☐ I am frequently stressed, anxious, frustrated or angry.
- ☐ I have an aggressive, competitive or hyperactive personality.
- ☐ I often drink alcohol or caffeinated beverages in the evening.
- ☐ I have Parkinson's or Huntington's disease.
- ☐ I take an anti-depressant.

If you have risk factors or symptoms, talk to your provider or dentist. Without treatment, severe bruxism can wear down your teeth and damage your jaws. The condition may also loosen or destroy costly dental restorations such as bridges and crowns.

Treatment can halt progressive damage. Your dentist may prescribe a custom mouth guard or splint, or correct misaligned teeth.

Fight bruxism with stress reduction. Regular physical activity, relaxation exercises, meditation, deep breathing and yoga help release tension.

Start now to protect your teeth and jaws.

Source: "Bruxism/Teeth grinding." Mayo Clinic, 5/18/07. Accessed 12/12/08 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/bruxism/DS00337>.

From the Physician:

6 Reminders About Taking Your Medicine

Medicine can save lives, fight disease and help you feel better if you're sick. Used incorrectly, however, drugs can create side effects, or interact with food or other medications. Work with your provider to make smart, safe use of your medicine.

1 Take a list of all the medicines you're using to every provider visit, including dietary supplements, over-the-counter drugs and prescriptions. List the drug name, dose, purpose and dates of use.

2 Tell your provider about current and past health conditions and treatments; if you are pregnant or breastfeeding; or have any drug allergies.

3 Ask your provider questions about any new medicines: The name, why you need it, how often to take it, and its possible side effects. Is there a less expensive generic version?

4 Ask about non-drug treatments for your condition, including exercise, diet and weight loss.

5 Fill all prescriptions at the same pharmacy. Make sure you have the right medicine and understand the directions before you leave the pharmacy. Ask about side effects and interactions with your other medicines.

6 Organize your medicine at home. Use a pillbox to sort your medications. Mark start and stop dates on your calendar. Pick up refills before you run out.

In addition, don't share old medicines with other people. Ask your pharmacist about safe disposal.

Source: Madelyn Pollock, et al. "Appropriate prescribing of medications: An eight-step approach." American Family Physician 75 (2007): 231-238.

Goal Line: For smokers: Quitting a pack-a-day habit will save you at least \$100 a month.

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SAFETY SOLUTIONS

Is Your Home STRUGGLING to Breathe?

Did you know that indoor air can be more polluted than the air outdoors? Routine activities such as cooking, cleaning, remodeling, heating and cooling pollute indoor air and increase our risk of breathing bad air.

Indoor pollutants can aggravate asthma and other respiratory ailments. Mold, carbon monoxide, dust mites, and animal dander are common indoor polluters. Sources include gas-powered appliances, fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, pets, candles, carpets, bedding, furniture and household cleaners.

An airtight home saves energy costs, but it may also keep fresh air out and bad air in.

Check for these signs of bad air:

- ☐ Air is stuffy and smells stale.
- ☐ Moisture runs down windows. (If you have a humidifier check to see if it's set too high.)
- ☐ A gas flame is yellow instead of blue (except in a natural gas fireplace).
- ☐ The pilot light in a gas appliance keeps going out.
- ☐ You smell exhaust gases (carbon monoxide is odorless).

Clear the air: Open doors and windows to freshen air. Run fans to improve air flow. And ban smoking indoors.

Spring into cleaning:

- Keep central air systems clean and maintained.
- Have fireplaces and the furnace inspected routinely; replace furnace filters often.
- Keep your home dry to reduce mold growth. Fix leaks and run exhaust fans in bathrooms to reduce moisture.
- Clean weekly to control dander and dust mites; vacuum and dust; wash bedding in hot water; and keep pets out of bedrooms.

Reactions to bad indoor air include headaches, fatigue, fever, sneezing, dizziness and eye, nose and throat irritation. If you feel better when you aren't home, indoor pollutants may be responsible.

Sources:

"Biological Pollutants in Your Home (CPSC Document #425)." Consumer Product Safety Commission, 2008. Accessed 1/6/09 at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/425.html>.

"Signs Your Home is Gasping for Clean Air." Living Safety, Fall 2007: 10.

Greener Cleaners

A clean home is a healthy home. It looks good, makes us feel better – and it reduces allergens and risk of infection.

However, cleaning has a downside: Some cleaners can irritate the eyes, skin or respiratory system and potentially damage the environment.

The Environmental Protection Agency suggests choosing low-toxic, biodegradable cleaners in recyclable packaging. Dispose of chemicals at your local hazardous waste collection site.

Learn how to use natural cleansing ingredients, such as baking soda and white distilled vinegar.

Greener cleaners are more than a "trend" with a purpose – our actions today will affect our planet's future health.

Sources:

"Greening Your Purchase of Cleaning Products: A Guide for Federal Purchasers." Environment Protection Agency. Accessed 11/5/09 at <http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs.htm>.

"Greener Cleaners." American Chemical Society, 2008. Accessed on 12/22/08 at <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/86/8603cover.html>.

ALERT: Above-Ground Pools

Above-ground pools are a popular and economical alternative to their far pricier in-ground cousins. If you're shopping for one, remember that safety rules for in-ground pools apply to those above too. **1** When the pool isn't being used, remove and secure the ladder. **2** Put away toys, such as noodles and floats; they can tempt children and put them at risk for falling into the water. **3** Install a fence at least 4 feet high (with a locking gate) to separate the pool from the yard and house. **4** Keep a phone and rescue equipment nearby. **5** Never leave younger children unattended around water, even in inflatable kiddie pools.

Sources:

Ileana Arias, PhD. "Summertime Safety." "Director's View": CDC Injury Center Blog. 6/26/08.

Accessed 12/12/08 at <http://www.cdc.gov/NCIPC/directorsview/blog-070808.htm>.

"Water-Related Injuries: Fact Sheet." CDC, 6/12/08. Accessed 12/12/08 at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm>.

Carl Baum, M.D. "More on Dry Drowning." WebMD, 6/9/08. Accessed 12/12/08 at <http://blogs.webmd.com/safety4kids/2008/06/more-on-dry-drowning.html>.

"The facts on dry drowning." Texas A&M Health Science Center, 7/31/08. Accessed 12/12/08 at <http://www.tamhsc.edu/news/?postID=2586>.

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EATING SMART

Fishing for Seafood Facts

Fish and shellfish supply healthy fats, but also contain contaminants. What do experts say about the benefits of eating seafood regularly? Are there any major risks? Challenge your knowledge about fish – is it seaworthy? FACT or FICTION?

1. Seafood nutrients are a source of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D.

FACT – The omega-3 fats in seafood are known to protect heart health. They lower blood pressure and triglycerides; help prevent blood clots; and reduce the risk for irregular heart rhythms and sudden death. Vitamin D helps protect bones. Fish also supply lean protein and the mineral selenium.

2. Mercury in seafood poses a serious risk to our health.

FICTION – When seafood is consumed at recommended levels, no consistent health risks to adults have been detected in recent studies. (*JAMA* 10/18/06) But the government advises young children and women of child-bearing age to avoid fish relatively high in mercury – shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish – and to limit albacore tuna to 6 ounces a week.

3. Eating seafood is associated with decreased risk of death from any cause.

FACT – Adults who regularly consume fish are 36% less likely to die from a heart attack, on average, and 17% less likely to die from any cause. The chances of stroke, depression and dementia also decrease in people who include fish in their diet. Note: Choose seafood that is low in mercury and other toxins (examples follow).

4. It's safe to eat more than 1 serving a week of some seafood species.

FACT – You can safely eat 2 servings a week of those seafood species that generally test low in mercury, including: wild salmon (fresh or canned), canned light tuna, shrimp, sardines, herring, tilapia, crab meat, imitation crab meat, scallops, mussels and clams.

5. Optimum intake of fish is 3-4 3-ounce servings a week.

FICTION – The Institute of Medicine recommends eating 2 3-ounce servings of fish a week. Studies show benefits far outweigh risks when eaten at this amount.

Sources:

Dariusz Mozaffarian and Eric B. Rimm. "Fish intake, contaminants, and human health: Evaluating the risks and the benefits." *JAMA* 296 (2006): 1885-1899.

"Fish intake, contaminants, and human health." *JAMA* Author in the Room Teleconference, 11/06. Accessed 12/08 at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/authorintheroom/authorindex.dtl>.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Shrimp & Cannellini

Fast, one-dish meal full of beans!

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp minced garlic
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper
- 2 cans cannellini (white) beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 large ripe tomato, diced
- ½ cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 pound medium shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 3 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 3 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice

- 1** In large skillet heat oil over medium temp.
- 2** Add garlic and crushed red pepper; cook, stirring frequently about 2 minutes.
- 3** Add beans, tomato and broth; cook until heated through, 2-3 minutes.
- 4** Add remaining ingredients and cook, stirring gently, until shrimp turn pink and curl slightly, about 2 minutes.

Serving suggestions: Serve warm or cool on a bed of romaine or spinach leaves.

MAKES 3 (1 ½ cup) SERVINGS:

PER SERVING:

418 calories | 32g protein | 9.7g total fat | 35g carbs | 9g fiber | 551mg sodium

Goal Line: Drop extra pounds with smaller portions. What's in a serving? Visit <http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/portion/keep.htm>.

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QUICK STUDIES

Telling your dentist about your medications is a lifesaver. Researchers found that reviewing drug history before even simple dental procedures saved patients' lives. Certain drugs, such as blood thinners, can cause excessive bleeding during many dental procedures. Before any dental procedure, give your dentist a list of all your prescription and over-the-counter drugs and your medical history. Discuss the pros and cons of the dental treatment, and ask if your dentist's office has a plan for medical emergencies. *Note:* If you have excessive bleeding or bruising after surgery, contact your dentist immediately.

Source:

"Disclosure of medication can save a patient's life." EurekAlert, 11/25/08. Accessed on 12/05/08 at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-11/aogd-dom112508.php.

Asthma patients have increased risk of pneumococcal disease. Mayo Clinic researchers found that adults with invasive pneumococcal disease were 7 times more likely to be asthmatics and 17% of the problems associated with the disease are caused by asthma. According to the CDC, pneumococcal infections are among the leading causes of death from a vaccine-preventable disease.

Source:

"Mayo Clinic study finds increased risk of pneumococcal disease in asthma patients." EurekAlert.org, 12/19/08. Accessed on 12/22/08 at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-12/mc-mcs121908.php.

EXPERT ADVICE

Best cooking oils (revisited)?

We heard from several readers about the February article on cooking oil guidelines. The questions concerned which oils are best for hot cooking. So here is a clarification.

There are 3 health factors to consider when using cooking oils:

1 Level of saturation – Most cooking oils are derived from plants and contain a mix of fatty acids. Oils high in *polyunsaturated* fat or *monounsaturated* fat are preferable to highly saturated solid cooking fats such as butter and shortening. Key differences:

- **Oils rich in polyunsaturated fat** break down in processing and cooking, which may cause free radical production that promotes cancer. *Examples:* corn, soy, and safflower. Due to their unstable nature, these are best consumed minimally (cooked or uncooked).

- **Oils rich in monounsaturated fat** are less likely to break down in cooking or produce free radicals. They promote heart health and may fight cancer. *Examples:* canola, olive, avocado, peanut and most nut oils.

2 Level of processing – Oils are extracted (refined) by various means that can strip essential fatty acids and produce unhealthy free radicals in the body.

- **Oils labeled *refined*** may undergo heating, bleaching, deodorizing and use of chemicals during extraction. These methods produce higher yields and are less costly than traditional techniques.

- **Oils labeled *unrefined*** are extracted mechanically without solvents. If an oil label does not specify unrefined you can assume the oil was refined.

Olive oil tip: *virgin* and *extra-virgin* are unrefined or lightly refined; *light* is refined.

3 Smoke point– This is the temperature at which oil begins to smoke when cooked. Keep oil temperature well below this limit.

- **For high heat cooking** such as roasting and stir-frying, choose refined oils that are also high in monounsaturated fat, such as canola, olive, and peanut.

- **For dressings, baking or marinades**, the most healthful are refined oils, including: nut, peanut, sesame, extra virgin olive, or semi-refined canola.

Bottom line: Best oils for health are high in monounsaturated fats, especially when minimally refined. For occasional hot cooking, use refined oils in moderation.